

REMARKS

This amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed September 25, 2003 having a shortened statutory response period ending on December 25, 2003. This response is filed within the statutory period as the Patent Office was closed December 25, 2003 through December 28, 2003. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 02-1818. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks below.

1. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-103 are pending in this application. Claims 104-117 have been canceled. The indication of allowance regarding claims 1-103 and the courtesies extended by Examiner Mullis during a telephone conversation on December 29, 2003 are noted with thanks and appreciation. In accordance with 37 CFR § 1.141, Applicants acknowledge that with the allowance of claims 1-103, the species election is withdrawn as claims 2-15, 17, 28-32, 43-47, 62-66, 70-83, 85, 96-100 are fully embraced by, depend from, or otherwise include each of the limitations of an allowed generic claim as set forth below.

<u>Claims</u>	<u>Depend from allowed generic claim</u>
2-15, 17	1
28-32	18
43-47	35
62-66	52
70-83, 85	69
96-100	86

Claims 104-117 have been canceled rendering the 35 U.S.C. §102(b)/103(a) rejections over International Patent Application No. WO 97/36741 to Babrowicz et al., moot. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-103 are in a condition of allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that claims 1-103 are in a condition for allowance and respectfully request a notice of the same.

Respectfully submitted,
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BY 

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